



Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
43301 Division Street, Suite 206
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 723-8070a

MEDIA RELEASE

PAGE ONE OF TWO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 9, 2015

For further information contact:

Bret Banks, Operations Manager (661) 723-8070

Violette Roberts, Community Relations & Education Manager
(760) 245-1661, ext. 6104

2015 Air Quality Report from California's Air Pollution Control Officers Documents Ongoing Trend Toward Cleaner Air Antelope Valley's Air Quality Improves Despite Drought's Effects

Lancaster – The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) today released its annual report, *California's Progress Toward Clean Air*, reporting air quality data and program highlights for all 35 local air districts in the state. The report demonstrates a long-term trend of air quality improvement as well as challenges that remain in meeting health-based air quality standards in the future.

The report compiles the latest air quality data from 2014 and presents it in an accessible format, helping the public understand how statewide air has improved over time.

The report reveals that since 1990, California's population has increased by 29 percent, the number of vehicles on California roads has increased by 32 percent, and the economy has grown by 83 percent, yet statewide emissions of smog-forming pollutants have decreased by over 50 percent;

While the report also indicates that the drought has significantly impacted levels of fine particulates in many California regions, the percentage of days when fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) levels on the Air Quality Index (AQI) were considered "Good" in the Antelope Valley increased from 76.2% between 2000-2002, to 97.3% from 2012-2014. PM2.5 is primarily formed in the atmosphere from gases such as sulfur dioxides, nitrogen oxides and VOCs, and is also directly emitted into the air from fuel combustion, and as fugitive dust.

"Our planning and conservation efforts are reaping dividends in the form of cleaner air for Antelope Valley residents," commented Marvin Crist, Governing Board Chair of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District, adding that, "We do have some serious challenges ahead in meeting stricter health based standards." The AVAQMD is the local regulatory agency for the High Desert portion of North Los Angeles County, including the Cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. The District is responsible for regulating stationary air pollution sources and implementing state and federal air

PAGE TWO OF TWO

quality rules and regulations within its 1,300 square mile jurisdiction, which is home to almost half a million residents.

The Antelope Valley also made strides in reducing concentrations of ozone - the main component of photochemical smog - between 2000 and 2014. According to the report, ozone levels in the Antelope Valley were considered "Good" on the AQI scale on 62.5% of days between 2000 and 2002, while from 2012 to 2014, this number increased to 65.6% throughout the AVAQMD's jurisdiction.

Although there is an ongoing trend of air quality improvement across the state, the federal government has recently proposed to strengthen the health-based standard for ground-level ozone. Achieving this more stringent standard will require further reductions of smog-forming pollutants on top of regulations that are already among the strongest in the nation.

The 68-page report contains detailed information on the state's clean-air progress and challenges, data on 2014 levels of ozone and PM2.5 around the state and descriptions of air pollution control programs at the state's air districts, including the AVAQMD.

For a copy of *California's Progress Toward Clean Air*, visit www.avaqmd.ca.gov.

-#-